

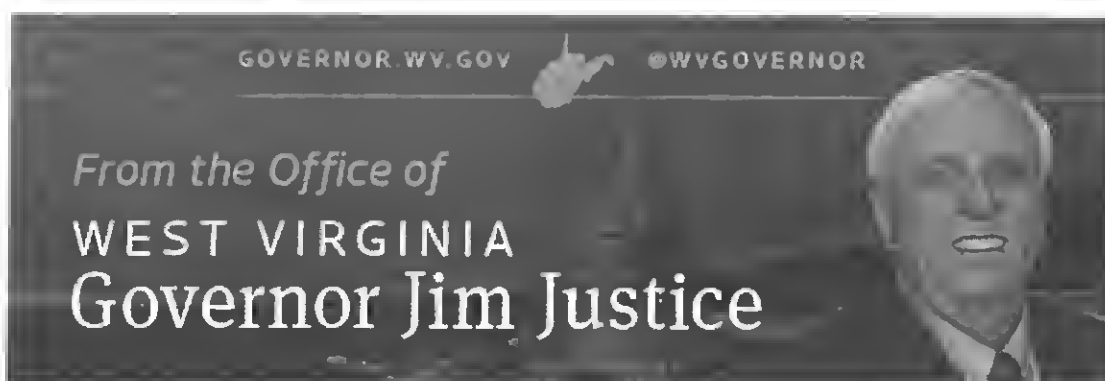
**Ken Ward**

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**From:** Office of the Governor <govofficecomm@wv.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 19, 2019 5:56 PM  
**To:** kward@wvgazette.com  
**Subject:** Gov. Justice amends special session call; adds bill to save Pleasants Power Station

A message for Ken Ward, Jr.  
- kward@wvgazette.com

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, July 19, 2019

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## **Gov. Justice amends special session call; adds bill to save Pleasants Power Station**

**CHARLESTON, WV** – Gov. Jim Justice announced today that he is adding an additional two bills and two resolutions to the proclamation calling for lawmakers to convene in special session. Additionally, the Governor is asking the Legislature to consider a revised version of an additional bill that was already added to the call in a previous amendment.

**WE'VE GOT TO SAVE THE PLEASANTS POWER PLANT AND ALL DIRECT  
AND INDIRECT JOBS NOW**

Included among the new bills is one which – if passed – would save the First Energy - Pleasants Power Station in Willow Island from closing. This plant has faced financial strain over the past several years because, due to its status as a Merchant Power Plant, it faces taxes that other plants do not have to bear.

Pleasants Power Station is the only power plant in West Virginia subject to this hindrance which makes its power rates uncompetitive in the market.

"Officials with the plant came to me this week and told me they needed help to be able to stay open and that they were getting crushed by this tax," Gov. Justice said. "I called our incredible team with our Department of Revenue and together we have found a way, within our means, to move some money around and make it work."

The bill would exempt certain merchant power plants from the business and operation tax, placing Pleasants Power Station on a level playing field with all the other power plants in West Virginia and across our border.

"This bill is so incredibly important because we're talking about saving people's jobs – good coal jobs – and saving entire counties that would be devastated if this plant were to close for good," Gov. Justice said. "This is an emergency and I'm calling on the House and Senate to work along with me to act on this as quickly as possible. We have a chance to save whole communities and we need to take it."

"On behalf of Pleasants County and the entire Mid-Ohio Valley Region, we cannot thank Governor Justice and the West Virginia Legislature enough for their attempt to address the unique tax situation with the Pleasants Power Station," Pleasants County Commissioner Jay Powell said. "If they don't

immediately address this tax issue, the Pleasants Power Station will cease to operate, which will directly impact coal miners, construction workers, and hundreds of families that depend on this plant.

"This plant invests over \$400 million into the state of West Virginia annually and Governor Justice and the West Virginia Legislature are doing their best to make sure it remains here for years to come," Powell continued. "We are so appreciative of all their efforts."

### **SAVE STATE MILLIONS - AUTHORIZE NEXT ROUNDS OF ROADS TO PROSPERITY BONDS**

The two resolutions added to the call both ask the Legislature for its authorization to proceed with the next rounds of State Road Bonds to be issued in conjunction with the Roads to Prosperity program.

Last year, the Legislature authorized \$800 million for the first round of the road bonds as part of the program. After taking the bonds to market in June, they brought back \$913 million, resulting in a premium of \$113 million.

"There's a real chance at getting another premium with the remaining Roads to Prosperity bonds, and with our economy doing so great right now, we've got to get these bonds ready for market," Gov. Justice said.

"This is a historic time for West Virginia's economy," Department of Revenue Secretary Dave Hardy said. "With our incredibly favorable economic conditions right now, it would be a major advantage for us to get approval as soon as possible for the coming wave of bonds, as far into the future as possible."

The first of these new resolutions asks for the Legislature to authorize \$600

million more in road bonds and proceed with taking them to market.

The second such resolution asks for the Legislature to authorize another \$200 million in road bonds, which can be authorized now but would not go to market until July 1, 2020.

### **ENOUGH IS ENOUGH - CUT RED TAPE; GET FLOOD VICTIMS BACK IN HOMES**

In addition to the bills being added, Gov. Justice has also asked the Legislature to consider a revised version of a bill, HB 145, introduced in a previous amendment to the special session call, which relates to contracts for construction projects that are a part of disaster relief programs.

The revised bill would cut through government red tape, which slows down the construction process and, thereby, slows down the recovery process for homes included in disaster relief programs, such as the RISE West Virginia program.

"I have mandated that our National Guard and General Hoyer get every single person who is still waiting on help from the floods of 2016 back in a home, and I've mandated that it has to happen as soon as humanly possible," Gov. Justice said. "The General and the entire National Guard have truly done an incredible job, but they are being slowed down by red tape outside their control and they need help. This bill will do just that."

### **RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN LICENSES**

The final bill being added to the call relates to residency requirements for licenses issued by the West Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Administration,

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, and the West Virginia Lottery Commission.

This bill would bring West Virginia law into compliance with a recent United States Supreme Court decision.

**[Click here for the link to view this amendment to the special session proclamation](#)**



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